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Farm Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture Office of Public Affairs Radio-TV Division Washington D.C. 20250 (202) 447-4330

Letter No. 2460

May 11, 1990

GATT RESULTS -- What kind of results can we expect if the U.S. proposals in the GATT Uruguay Round negotiations are accepted? World farm trade would increase as trade barriers are reduced over the ten years. Long-range planning for ag production & marketing would benefit. World market prices would be higher for the highly supported ag commodities after trade liberalization. Farmers would be more efficient -- subject to less government intervention.

What else? Production would shift from areas with current high support levels to those with lower levels. Taxpayers would gain. Reduced tax burdens would save more than \$80 billion yearly around the world. Consumers would pay lower prices in several key countries, such as the EC & Japan. Source: "GATT Trade Liberalization, the U.S. Proposal." For a copy, call: Marci Hilt (202) 447-6445. Contact: Larry Deaton or Matt Shane (202) 786-1700 or Bob Riemenschneider or Lee Ann Stackhouse (202) 382-1324.

MORE GRAIN AVAILABLE TO USSR -- Under Secretary of Agriculture Richard Crowder announced May 8 that USDA has raised the level of grain the USSR can buy this year without additional consultations from 20 to 22 million metric tons. The limit previously had been raised from a base of 12 million metric tons. It was increased to 16 million metric tons in October 1989 and to 20 in December 1989. Contact: Sally Klusaritz (202) 447-3448.

PHOTOSYNTHESIS TAKES A NAP -- On warm, dry afternoons, corn takes a photosynthesis nap that slows its growth, says James A. Bunce, a USDA scientist. This is the first report of such an afternoon drop in photosynthesis in the corn family of plants. The rate drops a total of about 30 percent on warm, dry afternoons in normal growing conditions. "A drop like that on a regular basis translated to cutting growth by about 10 percent," Bunce says. Contact: James A. Bunce (301) 344-3607.

GAULT NAMED -- Secretary of Agriculture Clayton Yeutter has appointed Phyllis R. Gault as deputy assistant secretary for administration. Gault, a CPA from Norman, Okla., has experience in both government & the private sector. She holds a degree in accounting from East Central State Univ., Ada., Okla. Contact: Kelly Shipp (202) 447-4623.

TURNIPS ARE TURNING OUT to be a big hit with sheep, says Steven P. Hart, a USDA animal nutritionist. In feeding trials since 1986 Hart has let sheep graze on pastures planted with Purpletop, a familiar table variety of turnip. "The sheep gain well on turnips," Hart says. "They'll eat the leaves first, then the top of the turnip. Then they'll actually eat down into the heart of the turnip, but they don't pull them out of the ground." Contact: Steven P. Hart (405) 262-5291.

TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER -- One major problem facing today's farmer is getting appropriate information about low input and sustainable farming methods. One way to get this type of information is from ATTRA -- Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas, in Fayetteville, Ark. ATTRA is funded by a grant from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Dept. of Interior. ATTRA's toll free line -- (800) 346-9140 -- is getting more than 100 calls a week from farmers. More than 40 percent of the questions center on reducing ag chemicals. Contact: ATTRA (800) 346-9140.

GREEN REVOLUTION NOT OVER -- For the 1990's, food production in poor nations may get a bigger boost from technologies developed decades earlier than from emerging biotechnologies. How effectively developing nations use these "Green Revolution" technologies -- enhanced & extended by the newer biotechnologies -- will help determine the future demand for U.S. food assistance. Many poor nations have yet to update their farming techniques or try new crop varieties. Source: April 1990 "Farmline." For a copy call: (202) 786-1494. Contact: Mary Knudson on (202) 786-1467 or Margot Anderson on (202) 786-1405.



TIBOR VERESS, a farm broadcaster from the Hungarian Radio National Network, learns how USDA Radio works from USDA Radio Reporter Maria Bynum. He also toured USDA TV. Veress spent two weeks at USDA learning how we disseminate information in the U.S. (USDA Photo by Vic Powell.)

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA #1718 -- It's a horse racing season again and recently Brenda Curtis paid a visit to a major horse raising & training operating in Florida for an inside look at how horses are prepared for the big race. (Weekly reel -- 13-1/2 min. documentary.)

CONSUMER TIME #1200 -- Safe food handling; landscaping with beauty & practicality; choosing a lawn care company; a cleaner auto fuel; eat fruit & stay alert? (Weekly reel of 2-1/2 - 3 min. consumer features.)

AGRITAPE NEWS & FEATURES #1707 -- USDA News Highlights; flexibility -- key word in some farm bill proposals; western water getting tight; a new weapon against horn flies; groundbreaking for a national soils conservation center. (Weekly reel of news features.)

NEWS FEATURE FIVE #1319 -- Aphid-resistant barley; "user friendly" pollution tracking; purslane -- weed or salad green; genetically engineered insects; reducing alcohol costs. (Weekly reel of research feature stories.)

UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE -- Wed., May 16, USSR outlook, horticultural exports; Thurs., May 17, cattle on feed, world dairy situation; Fri., May 18, U.S. ag outlook; Mon., May 21, wheat outlook, U.S. trade update, catfish production; Tues., May 22, crop/weather update; Wed., May 23, U.S. ag income & finance outlook, poultry production; Thurs., May 24, feed outlook; Fri., May 25, livestock update, world sugar situation.

DIAL THE USDA RADIO NEWSLINE (202) 488-8358 or 8359.
Material changed at 5 p.m. EDT each working day.

FROM OUR TELEVISION NEWS SERVICE
(Week of May 6, 1990)

FEATURES -- Pat O'Leary profiles EPA Ag Advisor & USDA Asst. Sec. Nominee James Moseley; a report from DeBoria Janifer on cutting fat from the diet; Lisa Telder of Michigan State University on regulating lawn chemicals; Joe Courson of the University of Georgia on how chicken wings have helped poultry producers.

ACTUALITIES -- Norton Strommen, USDA chief meteorologist, with a weather update; James Schaub, USDA economist, with the latest oilseed outlook; Tom George, USDA conservation official, on the U.S. water supply situation; Catherine Adams, USDA food safety official, on FDA's recent approval of irradiation of poultry; Don Foth, with USDA's Forest Service, with last year's reforestation report.

Available on satellite Westar IV, audio 6.2 or 6.8:

THURSDAY 7:30-7:45 p.m., EDT, Transponder 12D
SATURDAY 10:30-11:15 a.m., EDT, Transponder 10D
MONDAY 8:30-9:15 a.m., EDT, Transponder 12D
(Repeat of Saturday transmission)

ITS A GREAT TIME...to be in agriculture, says Gary Wergin (KFEQ, St. Joseph, Mo.). Producer attitudes have improved thanks to a series of rain storms that have given crops a good start. The enthusiasm carries through to other projects, such as the recent Missouri beef cookoff conducted in a shopping mall which generated a positive response by the public. Other side of the coin is that rains have helped boost alfalfa weevil population & wheat rust.

PLANTING...is nearly completed in the area served by Neil Trobak (KCIM/KKRL, Carroll, Iowa), but soil temperatures remain cool. They're looking for timely rains and warm breezes. Neil says prices received by cattle & hog producers are helping generate good attitudes, too.

CROPS...are off to a good start in North Carolina, says David Spatola (WNCT, Greenville). Development of tobacco, peanuts & cotton is well underway & ready for warmer temperatures.

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RUSSIAN...wheat aphids seem to be overwintering in CRP lands, thus escaping efforts to reduce populations on planted acres, says Gary Stewart (Northwest Ag News Network). While little damage is expected to the winter crop, there is concern about the aphids attacking spring grains. Gary says rain patterns have been widely variable throughout the Northwest -- some regions remain dry.

INJURY...to 16 year-old Ryan Patton, son of Kathy Patton (Kansas Ag Network/WIBW, Topeka, Kan.). Field cultivator fell on him, severing the nerves in his spinal column. He's now in a rehabilitation center sitting up and working with weights. Doctors are looking for a positive sign, such as a return of feeling to his legs. We join the family in hoping for a complete recovery.

VIC POWELL
Chief, Radio & TV Division